

Chapter II

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHAPTER II - ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

ROCKVILLE PIKE PROBLEMS - GENERAL

Rockville Pike presents several questions that the greater Rockville community needs to answer. What should be the character of the Pike? What is an acceptable level of development? What will it mean to me as a resident, shopper, merchant or property owner if traffic congestion overwhelms the corridor? The final answers to these questions will determine the future of Rockville's main street for the next 20 years.

The nature of the public planning process is to collectively identify the issues and problems now; devise adequate responses; and coordinate an effective strategic planning program to minimize negative impacts and promote positive effects for the benefit of all.



SPECIFIC ISSUES

Throughout the course of intensive public debate about the Rockville Pike Corridor, and its community assets and liabilities, a number of specific issues surfaced that are addressed in the Plan.

1. The retention of retail opportunities is an important issue for both residents and merchants. The requirements of the RPC Zone assure that an ample supply of retail space is available to accommodate a variety of retail services.
2. The appearance of the Pike, a typical strip commercial area, contributes to a negative image of the Corridor. The future appearance and design of the Rockville Pike Corridor will be guided by the urban design standards and urban design review.
3. The current C-2 Zone permits stand-alone office buildings that may become a dominant fixture on the Pike's skyline. The contribution of stand-alone office buildings to the character of social, political and community life is uncertain. The RPC Zone requires a mixture of uses in order to reduce dependency on automobiles and to encourage activity outside of normal working hours.
4. Traffic volumes and congestion seem to mount daily as development continues both within and outside the City with the Pike having to absorb, without relief, much of the pressures. The growth of traffic due to new development in the City will be monitored through the Standard Traffic Methodology. Continuing analysis will be done to determine what new road alignments or corridors could be implemented to ease traffic congestion. As currently programmed alternative routes to the Pike are completed, and as new development occurs in the corridor, this analysis becomes increasingly important. City staff will continue to monitor development in Montgomery County and changes to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to assure that the growth of traffic in the county does not exceed the capacity of the City and county roads.
5. Public transportation services appear to be in a state of uncertainty and change as the County "Ride-On" and Metrobus routes are continually modified. Stability and dependability must be reintroduced for the transit dependent rider in order to increase ridership.
6. Pedestrian circulation along the Pike and between retail establishments presents continued safety and convenience problems. Proposed sidewalk standards will improve walking conditions in the Corridor as existing sidewalks are replaced or upgraded.

7. Commercial impacts on residential areas such as parking and traffic should be minimized.
8. There is a need to increase housing opportunities within the City and in the Rockville Pike Corridor. Housing will be required in the RPR zone (Rockville Pike Residential) and permitted in the RPC zone (Rockville Pike Commercial).

OPPORTUNITIES

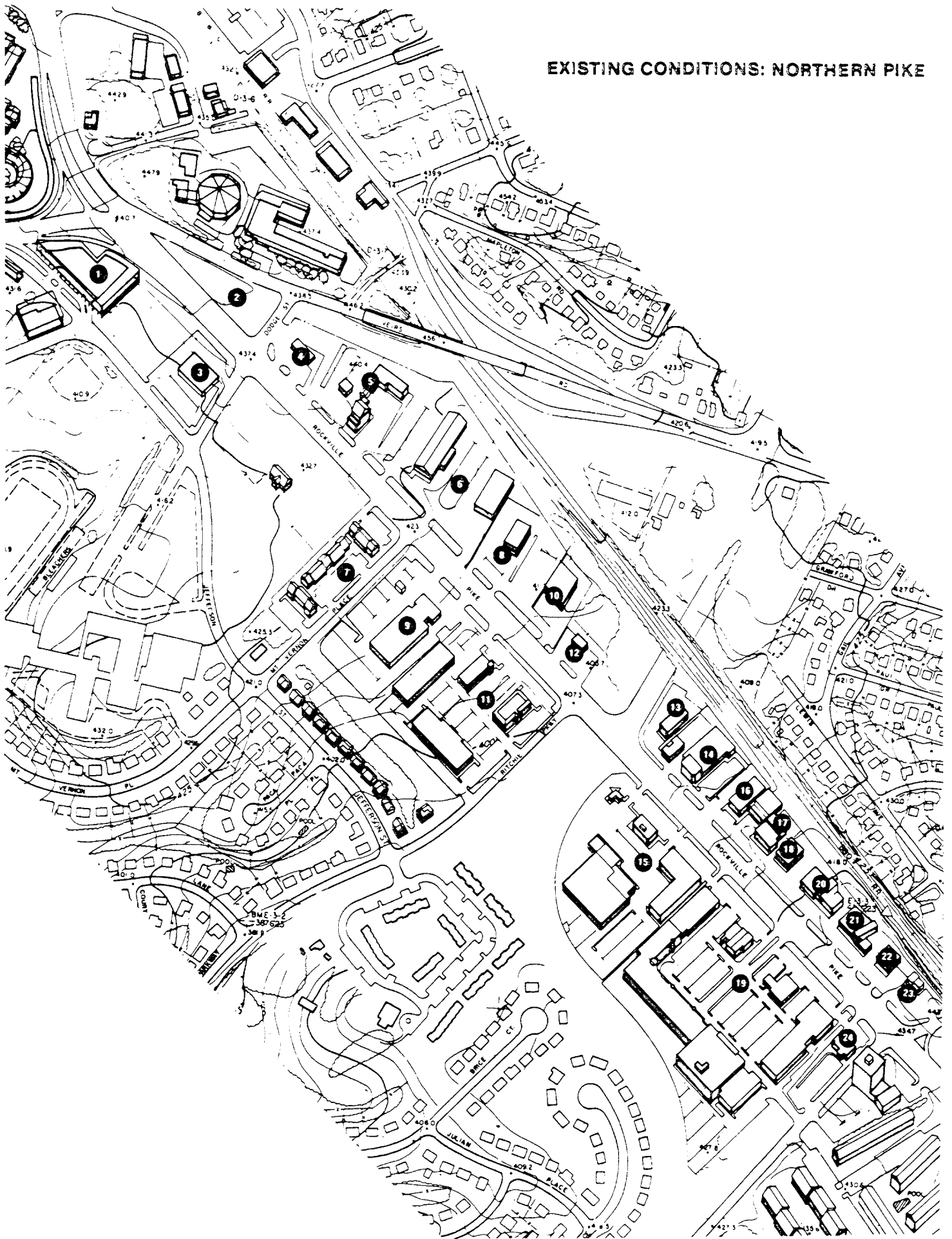
Rockville Pike is in a very good position with respect to the retail base due to the strength of the market. The vacancy rate is low, and turnover is due to normal market forces. Businesses that are space-intensive and industrial in character, such as printing and lumber, are moving out while specialty stores are moving in.

The following pages provide an inventory of existing buildings and the establishments that occupy them.

EXISTING CONDITIONS: THE NORTHERN PIKE

<u>Name of Establishment</u>	<u>Type of Establishment</u>
1. Jefferson Plaza	Office/Retail
2. Veteran's Park	Park
3. Spencer	Office
4. EXXON Service Station	Retail/Auto
5. Simmons	Retail
6. Century Ford	Retail/Auto
7. Barrister's Place	Retail/Auto
8. Pizza Pies-On	Retail/Vacant
9. Courtesy Jeep Eagle	Retail/Auto
10. Minut Mart	Retail
11. Ritchie Center	General Merchandise
12. Jiffy Lube	Retail/Auto
13. AAMCO	Retail/Auto
14. Centre Point	Retail
15. Congressional Olds	Retail/Auto
16. United Bedrooms	Retail
17. Montgomery County Liquor & Wine	Retail
18. Jerry's Sub Shop	Restaurant
19. Wintergreen Shopping Center	Retail
20. Surefit	Retail/Auto
21. The Wiz	Retail
22. Belby's	Retail
23. Shell	Retail/Auto
24. First National Bank	Service

EXISTING CONDITIONS: NORTHERN PIKE



EXISTING CONDITIONS: THE MIDDLE PIKE

<u>Name of Establishment</u>	<u>Type of Establishment</u>
25. Tenley Building	Office/Retail
26. Woodmont Park	Residential
27. Edmonston Crossing	Office/Retail
28. EXXON	Retail/Auto
29. Talbott Center	General Merchandise
30. Village Green	Residential
31. Woodmont Spring	Residential
32. Thomassen Lincoln	Retail/Auto
33. Veneman	Retail
34. Hunan	Restaurant
35. Tom Hatton	Retail
36. Jake's	Restaurant
39. Woodmont Station	Retail
40. Sunshine Square	Retail
41. Tyson Wheeler	Funeral Home
42. Computerland	Retail
43. McDonald's	Restaurant
44. Real Estate Central	Office
45. VOB	Retail/Auto
46. Woodmont Office Center	Office
47. Rentals Unlimited	Retail
48. Mastercraft Interiors	Retail/Furniture
49. Maryland Motors	Retail/Auto
50. IBM - Hines Building	Office
51. Woodmont Overlook	Residential

EXISTING CONDITIONS: MIDDLE PIKE



EXISTING CONDITIONS: THE SOUTHERN PIKE

<u>Name of Establishment</u>	<u>Type of Establishment</u>
52. Equitable S & L	Service
53. Chesapeake Plaza	Retail
54. Sunoco Service	Retail
55. Congressional North	Retail/Office
56. Congressional Building	Office
57. Devlin Lumber Yard	Retail/Building Materials
58. Phineas	Restaurant
60. Congressional Plaza	General Merchandise
61. Copeland's of New Orleans	Restaurant
62. Carpet Store	Retail/Household Goods
63. Goodyear	Retail/Auto
64. George's Tall Man Shop	Retail/Apparel
65. Visual Systems	Retail
66. Fritzbie's	Retail
67. Radio Shack	Retail
68. Diener's	Retail
69. Hot Shoppes	Restaurant
70. Roy Rogers	Restaurant
71. Congressional South	General Merchandise
72. Crowne Plaza	Office, Hotel & Retail
73. Twinbrook Metro Station	Public Service
74. Bethany House	Residential
75. High's	Retail
76. 174 Rollins Avenue	Office/Retail
77. 172 Rollins Avenue	Office
78. Beauty Shop	Service
79. 152 Rollins Avenue	Office
80. Putt-Putt	Entertainment
81. The Rib	Restaurant
82. Texaco Service	Retail/Auto
83. Shell Service	Retail/Auto
84. Rollins Avenue Fire Station	Public Service
85. Offices	Office
86. Post Office	Public Service
87. Color Tile	Retail
88. Barcorp Building	Office/Retail
89. Twinbrook Square	Retail
90. Auto Repair	Industrial
91. Auto Repair	Industrial
92. Holladay-Tyler	Industrial/Vacant
93. W. Bell	Retail
94. Quanta	Office
95. HBO Services	Office
96. Amoco Service	Retail/Auto
97. Twinbrook Metro Center	Office
98. Rockville Service Center	Retail/Auto
99. Dept. of Health & Human Services	Office
100. Day's Inn	Hotel
101. Midas Muffler	Retail/Auto

Most planning efforts that are focused on retail commercial areas are in response to a marked deterioration in the quality of the stores or buildings, high vacancy rates, and concern on the part of the citizens and merchants over crime and public safety. None of these signs of deterioration are in evidence in the Rockville Pike Corridor. To the contrary, retail shops and office buildings are proliferating, older buildings are being rehabilitated, landscaping is being upgraded, and shoppers are flocking to the area.

There is a positive relationship developing between office and retail activities. Merchants have mentioned that office workers are a very good source of customers. Businesses along the Pike have shown an increase in patronage and sales volumes with the development of office uses. Restaurants in particular are experiencing increases in sales, especially during lunch time. Potential exists to establish a closer relationship between the office and retail activity through the introduction of mixed-use zoning. Mixed-use development can reinforce retail activity in a number of ways by building in a market for retail stores from office workers and/or residents of the development.

Mixed-use development also offers the potential to reduce trip generation and the resultant burden on the streets and highways. Development sites near the Twinbrook Metro Station provide viable mixed-use development opportunities, and the Twinbrook concentration area of this plan addresses these uses. By recommending a significant amount of mixed-use development near Metro, Metrorail usage will be maximized and auto trips diminished.

Mixed-use developments are often more interesting and architecturally significant than single-use buildings and create a stronger identity and sense of place. The Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza mixed-use complex demonstrates the viability of such developments.

The Plan designates increased residential development along Jefferson Street and Rollins Avenue. Along Jefferson Street, the proposed residential development would complement the existing apartments on the west side of the street and would serve as a buffer from the more intense mixed-use development proposed along the Rockville Pike. Factors such as the proximity to Metro, shopping and entertainment, and the enlargement of a residential district can provide for the amenities necessary to make the area a successful location for residential use.

Rockville Pike is a vibrant, growing area that attracts thousands of shoppers, employees, and commuters daily. In addition, property along the Pike is in the hands of a relatively few interests. This is an asset when coordinating land use, development, transportation, and pedestrian access opportunities.

GOALS, OBJECTIVE AND POLICY DIRECTION

In August 1985, the Mayor and Council reviewed and adopted a series of goals, objectives, and policies reflecting the community's values and visions for Rockville Pike. These statements of public direction and priority have been carried forward by the Rockville Pike Advisory Committee, staff, and the Planning Commission throughout the planning process.

Goal

The Rockville Pike Corridor should seek to offer security, identity, and opportunity for Rockville citizens and business persons. It should serve as the commercial main street of the City providing a wide variety of convenience and shopper-oriented retail goods and services. It should offer a variety of mixed-use development of retail, office, and residential opportunities that respond to the diverse needs, opportunities, and expectations of the community and encourage the cooperation between businesses and residents to support this goal.

Objective

It is the objective of the Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, to: (1) encourage the continued economic growth and vitality of the Rockville Pike Corridor; (2) emphasize the need for a balanced transportation system that encourages all modes of transportation; (3) expand the retail, office, and residential bases affording opportunities to all Rockville residents; and (4) to promote a stronger sense of identity for this area as the commercial main street of the City. This can be achieved by emphasizing mixed-use development, imaginative urban design, attractive streetscapes, and creative mixed-and single-use developments appropriately scaled to achieve the planning goal for this sector of the City.

Policies

1. Protect existing residential areas and adjacent neighborhoods from encroachment of commercial land use, excessive traffic, unlawful noise, and pollution.
2. Foster an adequate supply of convenience retail activities to serve residents of the corridor and local neighborhoods.
3. Encourage mixed-use development to promote combined residential, retail, employment, and entertainment centers within the corridor.
4. Encourage cooperation between businesses and residents to support the goal.
5. Encourage excellence in urban design and architecture through the review of all projects to make them stand out as an overall statement of the quality and vitality for this area of the City.
6. Develop through the comprehensive planning process a plan that would address the traffic and transportation problems created by influences both inside and out of the City.
7. Aggressively monitor and seek to influence actions/discussions by the county/state that impact on the Corridor's planned highway capacity and development.

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